

Survivor Series Count-Up – 1998: The First Survivor Series Tournament

Survivor Series 1998

Date: November 15, 1998

Location: Kiel Center, St. Louis, Missouri

Attendance: 21,779

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Aside from the tournament there really isn't much going on here. Every major star in the company is entered as there are only two other matches: the Women's Title and Tag Team Titles are both being defended to round out the card. One wrestler not in the tournament is Shawn Michaels, who broke his back at the Royal Rumble and will be gone for several years as a result. Let's get to it.

The opening video is of the people in the tournament talking about wanting to be champion.

JR and Lawler talk about a big brawl that happened on Heat. They don't actually say WHO WAS IN IT, but it was apparently quite a brawl.

Here are the tournament brackets:

Undertaker

BYE

Kane

BYE

Rock

HHH

Goldust

Ken Shamrock

Mankind

???

Jeff Jarrett

Al Snow

X-Pac

Steven Regal

Steve Austin

Big Boss Man

This is a tournament where you could have easily cut out the first round and made it an eight man tournament but I guess they needed to fill in the time.

Here's Vince to open things up. The Undertaker and Kane recently shattered his ankle so he's hopping to the ring in a funny visual. Vince does a big intro for Mankind (Hardcore Champion) who is Corporate but is more of a comedic putz who Vince manipulates to do whatever he wants.

WWF World Title Tournament First Round: Mankind vs. ???

Vince gives a LONG speech about the mystery opponent and it's...Duane Gill. He was a jobber who injured his shoulder and was gone for two years to WCW. The fans thought it would be Shawn Michaels and are ticked off by the reveal. Then again it's meant to be a joke so it's not that big of a deal. The pyro scares Gill to death in an amusing bit. Gill is wearing a Pasadena Chargers shirt from the elementary school football team he coaches in his off time. That's both awesome and sad at the same time. Mankind is in a tuxedo and wins in 30 seconds with the double arm DDT. It would seem that a conspiracy is afoot.

Earlier tonight on Heat, Jacqueline jumped Sable. This gives us ANGRY Sable which is more funny than interesting or intimidating.

WWF World Title Tournament First Round: Jeff Jarrett vs. Al Snow

Jarrett is back in the WWF after a pretty horrible WCW run. His manager Debra is also making her PPV debut here. The first round matches only have ten minute time limits. Snow is now in his more familiar insane persona. Snow chases Debra around on the floor but hits a flip dive onto Jarrett off the stairs in a cool spot. We head inside and the bell finally rings. Jeff hotshots Al onto the top rope to take over but Snow is looking all psycho. Snow comes back and takes Jeff down before going up.

A guillotine legdrop misses and a dropkick takes Al down for two. Snow comes back with a crucifix for another two and counters a spinebuster into a DDT for two. They collide and here's Debra with the Head (a mannequin head that Snow carried around and often argued with). Snow goes to find it but gets Jeff's guitar instead. Jeff finds Head but the referee gets the guitar out of the ring. During the distraction, Snow steals Head and KO's Jarrett with it to advance.

Rating: C+. This is a good idea: take two talented guys and let them have a match. What more do you need to do? The ending was a little screwy but they got there on a smooth wrestling match. When Russo could be held back from making things too crazy, late 98 WWF had more than enough talent to put on fun matches like this. Good stuff and I'd like to see more of it.

WWF World Title Tournament First Round: Steve Austin vs. Big Boss Man

They're flying through this so far. Boss Man, now a corporate bodyguard for Vince and company, goes after Austin in the aisle but you don't win a fist fight against Austin in 1998. Austin sends him into the steps and we head in for the bell. Vince is watching in the back as Austin hits the Thesz Press and the middle finger elbow for two.

Boss Man hits Austin low to come back but it just gets a warning. After a quick chinlock there's the running crotch attack to Austin's back and an uppercut for two. Austin makes his comeback and stomps a mudhole in the corner. We head to the floor and Boss Man hits Austin in the ribs with a nightstick for the DQ.

Rating: C-. Nothing of note to see here but this was more about story than the match. Did anyone expect Austin to get eliminated by Boss Man and/or in the first round? This is the kind of roll Boss Man was good at: enhancing a story and taking something out of the bigger name before we get to the important stuff with the bigger names later on. There's nothing wrong with that and it kept him employed for years.

Vince smiles at the ending as Austin gets beaten down by the stick some more. He says the night is young.

WWF World Title Tournament First Round: X-Pac vs. Steven Regal

X-Pac is the 1-2-3 Kid and now a member of DX. Steven Regal is a British wrestler who is in the WWF because he was fired by WCW. This is one of those matches that doesn't need to exist but has potential. The winner gets Austin and X-Pac is European Champion coming in. Regal is a REAL MAN'S MAN here in one of the most entertaining gimmicks of all time. Lawler sings the song as Regal comes to the ring in a funny bit. Either that or the audio messed up there for a few seconds. X-Pac kicks him down and suplexes Regal for two. Two of those fast legdrops get another two on Regal but the Bronco Buster misses.

Regal puts on an abdominal stretch on the mat as things slow down a bit. Regal charges into the corner but gets caught in a sunset flip but he rolls out of that too and hits a slingshot to send X-Pac flying. Off to a surfboard stretch as things slow down again. This is probably the longest match so far and it's not even four minutes in yet. A gutwrench suplex puts X-Pac down and it's off to a headscissors.

X-Pac rolls that over and gets a freaky looking hold where he was on his back with his legs by Regal's head but he was cranking on the legs in a Sharpshooter position. That gets him nowhere but it looked good. Regal puts X-Pac on the top and hits a butterfly superplex for two. Back to another rib/arm hold as the fans are getting a little restless. They get back up and collide in the corner before X-Pac kicks his head off for two. The Bronco Buster hits this time but X-Pac goes up and gets crotched down to the floor, leading to a brawl and a double countout to give Austin a bye.

Rating: C-. Much like the other three matches, this didn't need to exist. The match was ok and one of the longer matches of the night (about eight minutes) but it doesn't need to happen. This is a match you could easily take out and give to a longer match later on. I mean, did ANYONE see these two as threats to the title?

Vince isn't happy with that and insists on overtime. It's sudden death too, making it just like every other wrestling match on the show tonight. That goes nowhere though as X-Pac walks to the back.

WWF World Title Tournament First Round: Goldust vs. Ken Shamrock

Shamrock is Intercontinental Champion coming in. Ken starts with a leg lariat and pounds away at Goldie. Goldust misses a lariat but a second attempt connects to shift the momentum. Shamrock clotheslines him out of the corner for two as this is starting very slowly so far. Off to a reverse chinlock followed by a Russian legsweep for two.

A regular chinlock follows that up but Goldust makes a comeback. That lasts about four seconds as Shamrock avoids a charge in the corner. A powerbomb from Goldust is countered and the referee blocks his Shattered Dreams attempt. It's hurricanrana, belly to belly and ankle lock to make Goldust tap.

Rating: D-. This was a long and uninteresting squash. Goldust was at a weird point here as he didn't really do anything and wasn't weird or creepy anymore. He was just kind of there as a guy who used to be good but in this match he could have been Barry Horowitz and been as much of a threat to Shamrock. Terribly dull stuff here.

Austin has refused medical attention but Cole thinks he'll be here later in the tournament.

WWF World Title Tournament First Round: The Rock vs. HHH

Oh wait HHH is hurt so we've got a replacement.

WWF World Title Tournament First Round: The Rock vs. Big Boss Man

Rock literally rolls Boss Man up and wins in three seconds, setting a new

WWF record.

Here are the updated brackets for the quarterfinals:

Undertaker

Kane

Rock

Ken Shamrock

Mankind

Al Snow

Steve Austin

BYE

WWF World Title Tournament Quarterfinals: Undertaker vs. Kane

Undertaker has Bearer here and is a heel but he's against the other heel faction headed by Vince. Naturally they were working together all along but that wouldn't be revealed for about seven months. Kane pounds on Undertaker in the corner and we're waiting on the first sell job. Kane kicks Undertaker down and clotheslines him out to the floor. The masked one stays on the offense on the floor but gets dropped face first onto the barricade.

Back in and Undertaker slugs away but there still isn't much selling going on. Kane powerslams him down but Undertaker sits up to avoid an elbow. Kane sits up as well and we get more punching. Undertaker gets a boot up in the corner and starts working on Kane's leg. The leg work goes on for a while because neither guy is capable of doing anything with any kind of speed whatsoever. They get back up and it's MORE punching. This is slow even for an Undertaker match to give you an indication of what I'm sitting through.

Undertaker gets caught in the corner with a clothesline and the top rope clothesline follows it up for two. They slug it out some more and neither

guy seems all that interested in selling anything. Undertaker tries a chokeslam but gets countered into one by Kane. Bearer distracts Kane on the apron though and Undertaker pops up with a tombstone to eliminate Kane.

Rating: F+. This was horrible as it was clear Undertaker wasn't interested in trying and Kane was only able to do so much in the first place. The match sucked as a result and things would only get worse as time went on. We would soon get into crucifixions, burials (as in dirt over bodies in graves) and demonic possessions between these two because this is professional wrestling.

WWF World Title Tournament Quarterfinals: Mankind vs. Al Snow

Mankind is still in his tuxedo. Snow jumps him to start and hits a clothesline for no cover. Mankind heads to the floor for a chair but Snow gets in a few shots to block it. A big chair shot misses Mankind against the post and Snow gets dropped on the chair to give the masked one control. Back in and Snow grabs Head but Mankind suplexes him down to take it out of Snow's hands. Here's Socko (which had been stolen by Snow and wrapped around Head's...uh...self?) Mankind clotheslines Snow down but gets caught in a sitout spinebuster for two. The double arm DDT puts Snow down and the Mandible Claw finishes.

Rating: D+. Another pretty worthless match but Mankind and Snow always seemed to have fun together out there. At the end of the day though, it's Al Snow vs. Mankind in a World Title tournament match so it wasn't exactly a secret as to who was going to win. Then again that's the problem with almost every wrestling tournament you have. Not much to see here but it could have been worse.

WWF World Title Tournament Quarterfinals: Ken Shamrock vs. The Rock

Winner gets Undertaker and this is another Wrestlemania XIV rematch. Shamrock gets in a quick kick to the face but Rock clotheslines him down to take over. Ken hooks a quick suplex for two and hits a clothesline in the corner. Rock hits another clothesline to take over. Out to the floor and Rock spits water in Shamrock's face, prompting Ken to send him into the steps. Back in and Shamrock stomps away before hitting a leg lariat

to take Rock down.

A Russian legsweep gets two for Shamrock and a running knee lift sets up a chinlock. Rock comes back with right hands but here comes Boss Man. Back to the chinlock as the fans get on the Boss Man. Rock makes a quick comeback attempt but gets caught in the ankle lock. While that would make Rock tap out in a few seconds back in the day, he's a good guy now so he fights to a rope.

Double clotheslines put both guys down and Rock starts taking over. Boss Man tries to interfere but it allows Rock to hit Shamrock low. There's the People's Elbow but it only gets two. The Rock Bottom is countered but Boss Man throws in the nightstick to Shamrock. Rock intercepts it though and KO's Ken to make the final four.

Rating: C-. Another not that great match here but it was better than most of what we've had so far. Shamrock is another guy like Boss Man who is a great soldier but was never going to get much higher than he was here. He certainly had a better chance at it than Boss Man, but that's not saying all that much.

The final four are now set:

Undertaker

The Rock

Mankind

Steve Austin

Bearer says Undertaker will win.

Women's Title: Sable vs. Jacqueline

Jackie, the woman Mero dumped Sable for, is defending. Shane McMahon (Vince's son) is referee after being demoted by Vince as part of a big story. Jackie kicks Sable down and, wait for it, runs her mouth. Sable comes back with a TKO but Mero pulls her out at two. Sable kicks Mero low and powerbombs him on the floor. Jackie decks Sable and runs her mouth

some more. Sable counters a tornado DDT and powerbombs Jackie for the pin and the title.

Rating: D-. It came, it went, it wasn't any good. People actually cared about Sable but the title became a prop very quickly. There wasn't even a division at this point as the title has only been back for a few months after years of being in retirement. There's just nothing else to say here.

WWF World Title Tournament Semifinals: Mankind vs. Steve Austin

Austin is banged up from the nightstick attack earlier but he goes right at Mankind to start. Mankind loses a show and Austin whacks him in the head with it as Vince is wheeled out. The distraction lets Mankind take over and hit a running knee in the corner. There's the Thesz Press but Mankind escapes the Stunner. Mankind runs out of the ring and towards the entrance but the Stooges bring him back.

Mankind sends Austin into the steps and then into the crowd as we're firmly in brawl mode here. Back to ringside and Austin goes face first into the steps. Off to a quickly broken chinlock before they clothesline each other down and Vince is getting worried. Austin rams into him and stomps a mudhole but Mankind goes out and gets a chair. That gets kicked into his face but Mankind hits the double arm onto the chair for two.

A piledriver on the chair is broken up because it would have destroyed Austin's neck even further. The Stunner connects but Vince jumps out of his wheelchair and beats up the referee. Mankind loses his tuxedo pants and puts on the Claw but there's the second Stunner. Shane comes in to count the pin but stops at two and flips Austin off, opening up a BIG plot hole. Remember that it was SHANE that rehired Austin recently, but apparently he was working with his dad the whole time. So why rehire him? Just to screw him over again? Really? Anyway Brisco hits Austin with a chair and Mankind takes the pin to advance.

Rating: C+. Definitely the best match of the night so far. It was insanely overbooked but it was certainly the best match due to the talent in there. Imagine that: take two of the best ever and give them some time and you get the best match of the night. This also opens up the door for

a surprise ending as Austin was the favorite going into the tournament. Basically they've done the DiBiase master plan from Wrestlemania IV but it actually worked here.

Vince and company immediately get in the limo and leave with Austin in pursuit. Austin hijacks a car and we've got a chase scene.

WWF World Title Tournament Semifinals: The Rock vs. Undertaker

Rock pounds away in the corner to start but Undertaker gets in a clothesline to the back of the head to take Rock down. We head to the floor and after being sent into the barricade, Undertaker knocks Rock's head off with another clothesline. Back inside and an elbow puts Rock down before Undertaker chokes on the mat. An uppercut puts Rock in the ropes and right hands abound.

Undertaker charges but gets backdropped to the floor and hit in the face with a water bottle. They head into the crowd for a few seconds and Undertaker gets the advantage back again. They slug it out with the monster getting the advantage again before walking into a Samoan drop. Here comes the Boss Man again as Undertaker sits up. Rock comes back and loads up the Elbow but Boss Man trips him up. Undertaker hits Boss Man because he's an evil guy, but here's Kane to chokeslam Rock, sending him to the finals by DQ.

Rating: D. If there have ever been two big names with worse chemistry than Rock and Undertaker, I'd like to know who they are. These two just could not have a good match together if their lives depended on it back in the Attitude Era. It never clicked no matter how many times they main evented PPVs. This didn't work either but at least it wasn't that long of a match.

Undertaker and Kane brawl everywhere.

Mankind is ready to climb his last Rock.

Tag Team Titles: New Age Outlaws vs. Headbangers vs. D'Lo Brown/Mark Henry

The Outlaws are defending of course. This was set up on Raw with both

challenging teams winning some match. Also this is the old triple threat tag match rules where there are three people at a time in there which I've always preferred. Billy and Brown start things off but Mosh comes in off a blind tag to try to steal a pin on Billy. Mosh hits a running body attack in the corner on Gunn before diving at Brown as well. Messy stuff so far. The Outlaws pound on the former Nation guys in opposite corners before the Headbangers double team Roadie.

Brown and Mosh trade pin attempts on Dogg. Off to Henry for a bearhug on Roadie until Mosh makes the save. It's off to Brown, Thrasher and Dogg as this continues to be ugly stuff. Gunn gets in a LOUD argument with the referee as Brown hurricanranas Thrasher off the top.

Roadie pounds on Brown and Thrasher but Henry takes his head off with a clothesline. Brown's running powerbomb to Thrasher is countered into a sunset flip for two. A Henry legdrop gets the same on Dogg, followed by the Headbangers double teaming Roadie for the same. Brown offers a pact with Mosh but gets kicked in the balls for his efforts. JR can almost be heard moaning at how bad this match is. Road finally escapes the beating for the hot tag to Billy. The fans LOVED the Outlaws so at least they're reacting here.

Brown hits the Sky High on Billy but since everyone is out of position, it takes forever to start the count. Jesse Ventura would have a field day with this. To further the stupidity here, Billy hits a Fameasser on Mosh but Henry makes the save with a splash, also hitting Mosh. Mark just stays on top of Mosh for a cover, but after two finishers it only gets two. That Mosh man, he's TOUGH. Billy finally piledrives Mosh to retain the titles.

Rating: F. This was terrible and there's no other way to put it. They were all over the place and no one was even reading the same book out there. The referee had to count very slowly so the saves could be made and there was no flow to this at all. Just awful and JR's commentary makes it even funnier, but in a kind of sad way.

We recap Austin getting cheated out of the finals.

WWF World Title: The Rock vs. Mankind

Vince and Shane are back and talking with Boss Man backstage. Feeling out process to start as Lawler makes fun of Halloween Havoc 1998 going off the air earlier a few weeks prior to this. Rock gets two off a clothesline and they head to the floor quickly where he gets rammed into the steps and Mankind takes over. Back inside for a chinlock as the McMahons come out. JR is very annoyed at various things and he vents a bit as they come to the ring. A suplex gets Rock out of the hold and Mankind is sent outside.

Rock suplexes Mankind on the floor but he has to go after the McMahons a bit. Into the crowd we go with Rock backdropping Mankind back to ringside. It's time for a chinlock but Mankind fights back up and hits a Cactus Clothesline to take it back to the floor. A chair takes Rock down again and Mankind gets the steps, only to have them knocked down onto him. Rock pounds on the steps on Mankind with the chair before cracking Mankind over the head with the chair.

That gets two back in the ring but Mankind kicks Rock low to take over again. Rock is sent back to the floor for the elbow off the apron. Mankind starts taking the announce table apart as JR loses it even more. A legdrop on the table mostly misses Rock but it gets two back inside. Off to the chinlock again and Rock's comeback is cut short by a backdrop to the floor.

Back in again and Rock hits a DDT to put both guys down. Mankind sends him to the floor AGAIN but a middle rope elbow sends the masked one through the announcers' table. The crash looked great if nothing else. We head back inside and the People's Elbow gets two. A double arm DDT puts Rock down and here's Socko. Rock hangs on in the Claw forever and comes out of it with a Rock Bottom but it only gets a delayed two. Rock puts on the Sharpshooter and Vince says ring the bell just like last year, giving Rock the title, because Rock is Corporate.

Rating: C-. This definitely wasn't their best performance with the constant going to the floor getting old fast. Mankind would have his day but it would take a good while to get there. This was all about the shock which shouldn't be a shock when you think about it. All night it was assumed that Mankind was the Corporate guy, but let's look at this.

Rock's first match was against a corporate guy and he just happens to get the easiest pin ever. Then a corporate guy throws in a nightstick so Rock can beat another corporate guy. Then Rock wins by DQ, and now this. That's establishing a story and giving clues instead of an illogical swerve. It's easy to tell which is better as this is shocking, but also MAKES SENSE. This is what Russo was capable of but we almost never got to see it.

Rock hugs the McMahons and JR erupts. Vince says the people have themselves to blame and the explanation is coming tomorrow on Raw. Mankind isn't sure what to do. Vince brags about screwing Austin over and Shane brags a bit in general. Rock says it's time for the fans to pucker up to him. Mankind wants to know why he lost because he never gave up. Rock hits him with the belt and here's Austin to clean house. This set up Rock vs. Austin for the title the next night in a HUGE match which I believe set a then ratings record.

Overall Rating: D+. This show was ALL about the stories and not much about the wrestling. The matches were mostly bad with a few ok ones, but those aren't the point. This was about Vince and Shane doing their things and getting their Corporate Champion. All of that was accomplished and this set the stage until Wrestlemania. This show doesn't really hold up that well on its own, but in context this would have been gold.

Ratings Comparison

Mankind vs. Duane Gill

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Al Snow vs. Jeff Jarrett

Original: B+

Redo: C+

Steve Austin vs. Big Boss Man

Original: D

Redo: C-

X-Pac vs. Steven Regal

Original: B

Redo: C-

Ken Shamrock vs. Goldust

Original: D+

Redo: D-

The Rock vs. Big Boss Man

Original: A (For Are you kidding me)

Redo: N/A

Undertaker vs. Kane

Original: C-

Redo: F+

Mankind vs. Al Snow

Original: D

Redo: D+

The Rock vs. Ken Shamrock

Original: C-

Redo: C-

Sable vs. Jacqueline

Original: D

Redo: D-

Mankind vs. Steve Austin

Original: C+

Redo: C+

The Rock vs. Undertaker

Original: B-

Redo: D

New Age Outlaws vs. D'Lo Brown/Mark Henry vs. The Headbangers

Original: F

Redo: F

Mankind vs. The Rock

Original: B-

Redo: C-

Overall Rating:

Original: C+

Redo: D+

Man what was I thinking with some of those ratings? I had no idea what I was doing back then and it shows.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/11/07/history-of-survivor-series-count-up-1998-deadly-game-the-tournament-not-hhh/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of Complete 1997 Monday Night Raw Reviews at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/product/B015IN12I2>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

The Open Challenge Was Answered By.....

A surprise....AND HIS NAME IS ALBERTO DEL RIO!!!! As managed by none other than Zeb Colter. This is quite the surprise but why not.

KB's Review: The Opiate Of The Internet Masses

Are you sure about what you saw last year?

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-the-opiate-of-the-internet-masses/41034/>

Monday Night Raw – September 22, 1997 (2015 Redo): That Night In The Garden

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 22, 1997

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City, New York

Attendance: 14,615

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This is one of the biggest and more important episodes in the history of the show. For the first time ever, the show is in the world's most famous arena as we're getting closer to Badd Blood: In Your House. The crowd hasn't been this big in a long time and you know the company is going to put on something special in this arena. Let's get to it.

We open with a video on the Garden itself, focusing on some of the major moments in company history in the building, such as Hogan winning his first title, Wrestlemania I, various Roddy Piper antics, Snuka's cage dive, Wrestlemania X and many others. Like I said, they're treating this like a very, very big deal and they certainly should.

Opening sequence.

Intercontinental Title Tournament First Round: Rocky Maivia vs. Ahmed Johnson

Slaughter comes out to eject the Nation before we get started. The winner of this gets Faarooq, who is advancing due to Shamrock having a punctured lung. Maivia jumps him on the floor but Johnson launches Rocky into the corner. Rocky's floatover DDT plants Johnson as Captain Lou Albano wanders out to ringside for no apparent reason. They head outside with Rocky sending him into the steps. Johnson has a bloody hand and Lawler finally says the truth that everyone knew about Johnson a year ago: he's injury prone. A spinebuster puts Rocky down and the Pearl River Plunge sends Johnson to the semi-finals.

Rating: D. Ahmed Johnson was a physical beast and a very strong in ring talent, but there comes a point where the guy can't be trusted with any kind of a push due to not being able to stay healthy. This was too short to mean much, but Johnson was himself and Rocky was still figuring out his heel persona.

Here's Steve Austin in the crowd to say you can't have Raw in New York City without Stone Cold. Nothing else is said, but this felt so much more natural than just showing him in the back with a camera on him for no reason other than the script says it's time to do that.

Sable plays lazer (that's how it's spelled on the box) tag with Howard Finkel. I'm thinking this is a commercial.

Legendary boxer Floyd Patterson is here.

Stills of Shawn taking the European Title from the Bulldog in England. This is considered little more than a power play from Shawn who took the title so he could get one up on the Harts and took a title he had no desire or need to hold.

Here's Undertaker with something to say. Vince announces a new stipulation to the Hell in a Cell match: the winner is the new #1 contender for the WWF World Title at Survivor Series. First up, Undertaker says the reaper will be calling for Bret soon, but first there is Shawn Michaels. The only way out of the Cell is over Undertaker's dead body but Undertaker will never rest in peace.

This brings out Shawn to complain about the WWF putting him in a no win situation. First he was put in the guest referee spot at Summerslam and now Undertaker is supposed to bury him alive. Then if he wins all that, he gets his title shot. Why should Shawn have to earn a title shot, when he's the only man ever to win every title in this company? Shawn promises to be one step ahead of everyone inside the Cell and all Undertaker has to do is show up.

Faarooq/Kama Mustafa vs. Legion of Doom

Sunny does ring announcing for no particular reason. Animal and Kama

start it off with Kama being sent to the floor, only to run back in to hammer Animal in the back. A powerslam plants Kama though and it's off to Faarooq vs. Hawk. Kama and Faarooq take turns on Hawk but he comes back with a neckbreaker, with Faarooq falling down before Hawk even starts. The Doomsday Device is loaded up but the rest of the Nation comes in for the DQ.

Ahmed tries for the save but the Nation still has a one man advantage and beats him down as well.

Clip of the Snuka cage dive in 1983.

Intercontinental Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Owen Hart vs. Brian Pillman

Owen has cops surrounding the ring. This week, Pillman has Terri in a leather skirt and leather bra, plus a belly button ring and a collar around her neck. Pillman's arm is in a sling due to falling in the bathtub for trying one too many things with Terri. Therefore, he has to forfeit here to send Owen into the finals. Owen agrees but Slaughter comes out and wants to see the x-rays and a doctor's report. Slaughter throws the mic at him and Pillman catches it with the bad arm. The match is on or Pillman never wrestles here again.

They slowly fight over a test of strength before having a clean break in the corner. A slow paced rollup gets two for Owen as I think you get the idea by this point. We take a break and come back with Owen all fired up due to Terri (I'm sticking with Terri as the announcers keep swapping between that and Marlina. It's the same person) hitting Owen with her purse, which Owen blamed on Pillman. Owen gets suplexed down but here's Goldust to attack Owen, eliminating Pillman and sending Hart to the finals.

Rating: D+. I liked the idea here so it's hard to fault them for not having a plan. The purse part really wasn't needed as you could have just done the same match until Goldust came in, but points for mixing things up a bit at least. It wasn't a good match or anything, but it was nice to see them trying something that made sense.

Owen brags about his win but Austin comes in and nearly gets arrested. Vince comes in and says hang on. Apparently Vince has authority over police officers because he gets them to back off for now. He asks Austin why he doesn't get that he's barred from competing at the moment. Austin could wind up paralyzed (Lawler: "That would be good.") and the WWF isn't going to let him do that. What Austin needs to learn is to work within the system.

Austin says this is what he does for a living and no one can tell him that he isn't the best in the world. He appreciates that the WWF cares, and there's the first of 1,000 Stunners to Vince, who sells it worse than anyone ever by falling over Austin and shaking like a fish. That's enough for the cops to arrest Austin, who is cheered louder than anyone in years. As the cops are taking him away, Austin flips Vince off one more time, beginning the greatest war in wrestling history.

Let's stop and look at this for a second. Obviously Vince would go on to become Mr. McMahon, probably the best villain that has ever lived (or one of the best no matter how you look at it). His big line is coming in November, but look back at what led up to that. You have Bret going nuts on Vince back in February, then the multiple issues with Shawn, and now Austin.

When Austin won the WWF World Title in 1998, Vince told Austin that they could do things the easy way or the hard way. Most of 1997 was Vince trying to do things the easy way and getting burned. When he saw that the old ways weren't working anymore, he went full on the other way and became Mr. McMahon, who would keep control by any means he had available. Mr. McMahon was a character with a much stronger backstory than he's given credit for having.

Hour #2 is dedicated to Bulldog Brower. What does it say when you're not even worthy of having a full show dedicated to you?

The remaining announcers brag about not leaving the booth in a shot at WCW.

We get a bunch of replays of the Stunner to Vince.

Dude Love vs. Hunter Hearst Helmsley

Pinfalls count anywhere. Helmsley throws in a crotch chop before the curtsey. Dude's music plays but instead he pops up on screen. He won't be coming out here because pinfalls count anywhere really isn't his bag. It's not a love thing you see. However, Dude knows someone whose bag it is. He's a kind man and a cooky type of cat.

In a bizarre visual, Mankind comes in to talk to Dude Love face to face. As much as Mankind has dreamed of hurting Helmsley in this match, there's someone Mankind knows who could do it even worse. Dude asks Mankind to bring him out, so here's CACTUS JACK, making his WWF debut and standing with the other two faces of Foley.

This is another one of the most amazing visuals ever as we're almost inside of Foley's head here and seeing how out there he really could be. The idea of actually seeing all three of them next to each other blew my mind and was something that had to be seen to be believed. The best part: it's going to get even better.

Hunter Hearst Helmsley vs. Cactus Jack

The fans lose their minds at Cactus actually being in the WWF. Helmsley charges right at him and gets nailed with a trashcan on the ramp. The ECW chants start up and Cactus peels back the floor mats for a swinging neckbreaker on the concrete. They head inside, just so the Cactus Clothesline can take it back outside again. Helmsley starts running so Chyna can get in a cheap shot, which is totally legal here.

They fight into the crowd and then into the back with Helmsley slamming Cactus on the concrete for two. Cactus comes back with a fire extinguisher blast to the face, sending Helmsley into the barricade, which is completely broken down. Not just a piece of it but the entire section on one side of the ring. It heads back inside but Cactus whips him across the ring so hard that Helmsley falls right back to the floor. The Cactus Elbow off the apron only hits trashcan though and Helmsley FINALLY has a breather.

We take a break and come back with the guys in the ring and Helmsley

hitting Jack with a mop. They fight to the apron and Cactus gets in a low blow to knock Helmsley outside. Cactus dives off with a sunset flip for two, followed by a backdrop onto the ramp for a sick thud. Chyna's chair shot to Cactus has almost no effect so Helmsley hits Cactus in the back, only to drive Cactus into Chyna, who goes into the steps.

Chyna is out cold so Helmsley suplexes Cactus on the ramp as both guys can barely move. A shovel to the back keeps Cactus down and Helmsley slams him head first into the steel. Now it's table time and the fans couldn't be happier. Helmsley loads up the Pedigree but Cactus reverses and grabs a pulling piledriver to drive Helmsley through the table for the pin. We get a famous visual of the camera looking down at Cactus, who smiles at the pain.

Rating: A. This is one of the best matches ever on Raw and one of best moments the company ever had. The promo before this set Cactus up as perfectly as it could have and the Three Faces of Foley are finally here. Great stuff here and something that really hadn't been seen in the WWF before. I mean, it had been seen in ECW, but the WWF in Madison Square Garden is a bit higher on the food chain.

So in the last half hour, we had the first Stunner to Vince, the debut of Cactus Jack and then that classic. If there has ever been a better and more famous half hour in the history of Monday Night Raw, I've never seen it.

Video on a sweepstakes for Survivor Series.

Clip of the first Wrestlemania with Andre the Giant slamming Big John Studd.

More stills of Bulldog vs. Shawn in England.

Here's Shawn with the chair that started his feud with Undertaker. Shawn has a story for us because we're all wondering how he became the first Grand Slam Champion. Shawn sits down in the chair and says he wants Undertaker out here to face him right now. So much for story time.

We take a break and come back with Shawn still calling Undertaker out.

Cue the Undertaker, who was nice enough to wait until the show came back from a break. Helmsley comes out to slow him down and Shawn gets in the chair shots as Rude and Chyna come out to help. Rude chairs Undertaker a few times and Undertaker just stands up, sending Shawn and company running off.

Bret Hart vs. Goldust

Non-title. Before the match, Bret says he doesn't care who wins between Undertaker and Shawn. He's not afraid of Undertaker and he'd love to give Shawn the beating he deserves for what he did to the Bulldog. Goldust still only has half the paint on, which is due to half of him missing. They slug it out to start as Lawler gets in as many jokes as he can about Pillman and Terri.

Bret stomps him down in the corner and starts going after the knee so Goldust rakes his eyes. That's fine with Bret who cannonballs down onto the knee and flips off a fan in the front row. He slaps on the Figure Four around the post but Shawn saunters down the ramp as we take a break. Back with Bret staying on the leg and Shawn dancing on the stage. So where is Undertaker while this is going on?

Goldust gets in a few right hands but a kick to the knee puts him right back down. A suplex gives Goldust a breather and he gets in a sweet right hand. Goldust kicks Bret out to the floor and limps outside to keep up the fight. Back in and a bulldog gets two on Bret but raises his boot and gets caught in the Sharpshooter for the quick submission.

Rating: B-. This was a good match that people aren't going to remember after everything else that happened on this show. It's always cool to see Bret getting to pick a talented wrestler to pieces and then make them quit. That is the definition of technical wrestling and psychology and Bret was as good as anyone in history at making it work.

Bret won't let go so Shawn runs in for the save. Cue Helmsley, Chyna, Owen and the limping Bulldog. Rude and Neidhart follow but it's Undertaker to really make things interesting. Shawn and Bret are left alone with Undertaker and a double chokeslam ends the show.

Overall Rating: A. This is still one of the best episodes the show has ever had. They knew they had to do something special in Madison Square Garden and knocked it out of the park. You can see the future waiting to break out here and the main event stuff is just as great. The three way feud between Undertaker, Bret and Shawn is the culmination of the last year of main event storylines (well minus Sid but is anyone really missing him?). It's still a great show and well worth seeing if you never have before.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of NXT Reviews: The Full Sail Years Volume I at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B011T13PV4>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Summerslam Count-Up – 2006: Old Degenerates and Older Americans

Summerslam 2006

Date: August 20, 2006

Location: TD Banknorth Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Attendance: 16,168

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Tazz, Joey Styles, John Bradshaw Layfield

This is an interesting show as a lot has changed since last year but WWE is still in the same kind of situation: the shows are coming and going and not a lot is changing. The shows aren't bad, but there's nothing that feels like required viewing. This year we have DX vs. the McMahons, Edge defending the Raw Title against Cena, Batista challenging King Booker for the Smackdown Title, Flair vs. Foley in an I Quit match, Hogan vs. Randy Orton and the first ECW Title match in WWE PPV history. The card is stacked but nothing on here feels must see. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about DX taking over the company with their sophomoric jokes. The other matches get some lip service as well.

Rey Mysterio vs. Chavo Guerrero

Guerrero claimed that Rey was leeching off the Guerrero name, which he totally was but Guerrero is still playing the heel here. We get videos on Eddie's relationships with both Rey and Chavo, conveniently ignoring Rey vs. Eddie from last year. Apparently Chavo is coming out of retirement for one night only. The brawl is on fast and JBL is WAY into it already. Chavo hits a quick uppercut and catches a standing Lionsault into a powerslam position, only to have Rey armdrag him out to the floor.

Mysterio misses a plancha to the floor and Chavo hits a big dive of his own to take over. Chavo shouts that it's his blood instead of Rey's as JBL calls this the biggest comeback since the resurrection. Rey charges into the corner but Chavo drops him face first onto the buckle to put him down again. Chavo does the Eddie dance, drawing the crowd into the Eddie chant. The masked dude is knocked to the floor and then face first into the buckle to keep him on defense.

Chavo puts him on the top rope and tries to powerbomb Rey to the floor but Rey fights out to avoid death. They facejam each other down to the mat and both guys are in trouble. Back up and Rey gets two off a springboard cross body. A hard kick to the head gets the same for Rey before he hurricanranas Chavo into the 619. The seated senton misses and Mysterio hurricanranas both guys out to the floor.

Chavo takes control and sends Rey back in but here's Vickie to yell at him. Rey dives off the apron with something the camera misses to take out

Chavo and we head back inside. Chavo hits two of the Three Amigos as Vickie is screeching at them to stop fighting. Rey hits the Three Amigos and goes up top but Vickie keeps shouting at him to stop before accidentally crotching him down. Chavo hits a brainbuster and the frog splash for the pin.

Rating: C+. The match was entertaining enough but the bleeding dry of Eddie's corpse is well beyond old here. Seriously, they were fighting over who was really defending Eddie's honor. It was fun stuff but the Vickie screeching is getting already getting annoying. She's been around seven years. How is that possible?

Booker is holding the title with a maniacal look in his eyes. He rants in a British accent for a bit and says he and Sharmell are the most powerful couple in wrestling. This brings in Edge and Lita who just happened to be standing off camera when Booker said that. They debate how important they are and make a wager: if Booker loses he has to be Edge's servant but if Edge loses he has to kiss Booker's feet.

This is a good example of what I mean when I talk about the show looking too structured. Why were Edge and Lita right there to respond to those comments? It comes off as so fake and set up in advance that it kills whatever air of realism the show has. Have Booker say they're the powerful couple, then have Edge and Lita come in later in the show. Same amount of time spent, same result, doesn't look forced. Why is this so complicated?

ECW Title: Big Show vs. Sabu

Big Show is defending after Sabu beat Van Dam in a ladder match this past week. It's extreme rules, which is a rarity for these title matches anymore. Sabu starts fast by swinging a chair and gets a quick one count off the Arabian Facebuster. The chair is set up in the middle of the ring but Big Show drops Sabu face first onto the steel. Big Show crushes the chair with his boot and chops Sabu down with ease.

We hit an early bearhug but Sabu pokes the eyes to escape. A springboard is caught in a fallaway slam from Big Show to send Sabu to the outside. The small one grabs a chair to blast Show in the face before dropkicking

it into Show's face. Sabu it too banged up to immediately cover so it's only a one count. With nothing else working, Sabu loads up a table in the corner and hits a tornado DDT for no cover.

Sabu finally knocks him through the table off a springboard from the chair but Show pops up and electric chairs Sabu down. A Vader Bomb crushes Sabu and Show brings in two sets of steps. He bridges a table across them but his chokeslam is countered into a DDT through the table. Sabu sets up another table but charges into a chokeslam through it for the pin.

Rating: D. I don't care. Seriously that's the first thing that came to my head. This was less than nine minutes and the ending was never in double at all. At least a third of the match was spent setting up the next spot, especially near the end. The early days of WWECW with the old ECW guys were just torture to get through as it was clearly trying to recreate magic and it wasn't anything of note. Dull match here and it would be several months before ECW picked up.

Layla won the Diva Search earlier this week.

The Divas welcome Layla to the company. These stupid girl power segments got old fast. Everyone gets on her and then say they're all kidding. Layla is dragged into the shower and spanked for her initiation. Everyone is clothed so this goes nowhere.

We recap Hogan vs. Orton. Hogan is a legend, Orton is the legend killer, I think you can do the math. There was a stupid bit with Orton hitting on Brooke thrown in which went nowhere.

Randy Orton vs. Hulk Hogan

Hogan has a bad leg coming in, meaning he's perfectly normal. Hulk easily shoves Orton down out of lockup to start before running him down with a shoulder block. The bandana goes into Orton's face before Randy grabs a headlock. Hogan fights out with a top wristlock as we're still going very slowly so far, much to Hogan's liking. Randy finally gets in some shots to the face to put Hogan down, thereby making him the biggest heel in the world.

Hogan fights Orton off in the corner and sends him into the buckle. Almost all Hogan so far which continues as Hogan pounds down right hands in the corner. He bites Randy's forehead and pokes him in the eye to keep us firmly in the mid-80s. Hogan rakes his back and pounds away on the mat before threatening the referee with a right hand. Orton holds the ropes on an Irish whip and pulls Hogan to the mat to work on the knee.

Back in and Orton cannonballs down on the leg before doing a short form of the circle stomp. A chop block puts Hulk down again but he ducks/collapses to avoid a high cross body. Hogan pounds away but misses the big boot, allowing Orton to dropkick him down. The RKO connects for three but Hogan's foot was on the ropes. Orton argues with the referee, Hulk Hulks Up and the legdrop ends it.

Rating: D. Well let's see: the booking was out of the 80s, Hogan broke a sweat for maybe a minute, and Orton was pinned clean by a 50+ year old man in about eleven minutes. This is the opposite of last year with Shawn as Michaels didn't have much to gain from a win. Orton on the other hand could have ridden this win for months, but instead we get Hogan's last WWE match (which you couldn't have known at the time) as a tribute to him, complete with the 1985 formula all over again. Not a fan of this but you had to know it was coming.

We look at a big party yesterday which is exactly what you would think it was. This was also the announcement for WWE 24/7, which was nowhere near as cool as it sounded.

Melina isn't sure if Foley can beat Flair but he freaks out on her, saying he'll do it. This was an awkward on screen relationship.

Ric Flair vs. Mick Foley

In something else that was kind of awkward, these two traded shots at each other in their books with Foley saying Flair wrestled the same match for years and Flair calling Foley a glorified stunt man. Tonight is an I Quit match and it's all about respect. Foley jumps Flair in the corner and pounds away before hitting the running knee to the head. A running trashcan shot to the head has Flair in early trouble and it's already Socko time. Flair won't give up so Foley says he'll suffer.

Foley wraps barbed wire around the sock but Flair grabs Mick's crotch to block it. We're not even two minutes into this and we've already had a crotch grab. A low blow puts Mick down and Flair wraps the barbed wire sock around his hand for some chops. Ric sends Foley knees first into the steps but Foley rams him into the announce table to get a breather. Foley pulls out a barbed wire board and blasts Flair in the back with it to make Naitch scream.

We head inside again and the fans want fire. Flair is busted open (duh) so Foley rubs the barbed wire over the cut for good measure. A barbed wire board to the head and the shoulder have Flair in even more trouble but he tells Foley to kiss something instead of quitting. Foley spreads out the thumbtacks and slams Ric down onto them in a scary looking but perfectly safe spot. Think about it: the tacks are what, half an inch long? All they're going to go into is fat so while it'll hurt, there's no real danger to the spot. It's like being stung by a bunch of bees.

Anyway Flair still won't quit so Foley brings in the barbed wire ball bat to cut at Flair's head even more. Flair hits his second low blow to escape before sending him shoulder first into the post. The ball bat to the shoulder has Foley in big trouble as Ric goes into old school brawler mode. Foley won't quit so Flair threatens to kill him by cutting out his heart.

A third low blow has Foley on the apron, allowing for Ric to knock him off the apron and onto the concrete. Foley is apparently out cold so medics and Melina come out to check on him. The trainer says it's over and the bell rings. That's not good enough for Flair though and he sends Foley back in to rub the ball bat over Foley's face again. He runs the barbed wire over Mick's unconscious eyes and Melina throws in the towel to end it. Wait that's STILL not good enough for Flair because Foley has to say it. Ric threatens Melina with the ball bat and Foley quits to save her.

Rating: B. This was one heck of a bloodbath until Melina had to get involved. I get that they didn't want either guy to quit but dang man, did we really need Melina out there? Like I said it never was a good fit on screen and would end with Melina screwing over Foley for no apparent

reason. Good match, but Flair flat out doesn't need to be doing this at his age.

Vince, Shane and Armando Alejandro Estrada (Umaga's manager) make fun of Foley until Vince asks if they have Umaga's support tonight. Armando says si.

Smackdown World Title: Batista vs. King Booker

Booker is defending and Batista never lost the title, only being stripped due to injury. This is his first major match since December/January. Booker's wife Sharmell reaches Vickie levels of annoying by saying ALL HAIL KING BOOKER about 18 times on the way to the ring. Feeling out process to start with Booker taking him into the corner and slapping him across the face. Batista easily shoves him across the ring to prove a point as things are starting slowly.

The champion grabs a headlock but completely misses a spin kick, allowing Batista to counter into a powerslam for two. Booker tries to bail with Sharmell but Batista doesn't even let him get close. Back in and Booker blocks a Batista Bomb by snapping Batista's neck across the ropes to take over. We hit a chinlock less than four minutes in and the fans aren't pleased. Back up and Batista hits a sloppy belly to belly suplex for two but Sharmell sends in the scepter for a cheap shot, giving Booker more control.

Booker goes after the arm, which is the injury that kept Batista on the shelf for so long. That makes too much sense though so it's off to a regular chinlock. Batista finally gets up and crotches Booker on the top before hitting some weak clotheslines. They head to the floor with Booker sending him into the barricade to take over. A missile dropkick gets two on Big Dave but the ax kick misses. Batista Jackhammers him down for two and busts out a full nelson slam of all things. He loads up the Batista Bomb and Sharmell comes in for the lame DQ.

Rating: D. Well at least it wasn't that long. These two had horrible chemistry together so of course they had two more PPV matches until Batista finally took the title at Survivor Series. The ending sucked, the match sucked, Batista looked as slow as Hogan out there, and the fans

were bored by the match. Sounds like it needs a sequel to me.

Post match Batista "destroys" Booker, which translates to him not being able to get him up for a Batista Bomb until Booker clearly pulls himself up. Again, this feud went on for three more months.

Jeff Hardy is coming back tomorrow. Why bother announcing it when you can have a big surprise like that?

DX talks to someone we can't see. They tell him how much Vince praised Umaga, calling him the REAL monster in WWE. They leave and whoever was in there bangs on the door.

We recap DX vs. the McMahons. This feud started with Shawn vs. Vince but HBK recruited HHH to help him out. DX destroyed a bunch of Vince's stuff and made fun of him, basically getting on the nerves of everyone over 17 years old. Vince and Shane brought in everyone imaginable to help them but DX dispatched them easily because they're both Hall of Famers and they were fighting jobbers to the stars. Umaga was the only one who could beat them one on one, making those matches the only interesting parts of the entire feud.

D-Generation X vs. Vince McMahon/Shane McMahon

Vince and Shane head back to the entrance and send out the Spirit Squad as the first line of defense. Superkicks, backdrops and Pedigrees abound, getting rid of the Raw Tag Champions (the cheerleaders) in less than fifteen seconds. DX beat the Spirit Squad about five times in this whole thing but never won the tag titles. I never quite got why.

Next up are Kennedy, Finlay and Regal who do a bit better thanks to Finlay's club but only last about 40 seconds. Now it's Big Show to really challenge DX. Why all nine guys didn't come out at once is never really addressed. The three midcarders take down HHH on the floor, leaving Shawn alone with Show. A cobra clutch backbreaker and the Log Roll knock Shawn silly as HHH is destroyed. Now the McMahons come to the ring and there's the opening bell.

Vince slams Shawn down to start and it's off to Shane for some dancing.

He peppers Shawn with left jabs and hits a big right cross to puts him down. HHH is still down from a chokeslam through the announce table. Vince comes back in for something like a clothesline to the ribs and fires off elbows in the corner. A double back elbow puts Shawn down and HHH is finally remembering what planet he's on. Shane of course slides to the floor to knock him down again, which is pretty smart.

Shane hits a backbreaker on Michaels and it's back to Papa McMahon. There's a double elbow but HHH is on his feet. Shane, again, wisely baseball slides him onto the other announce table. The McMahons bust out the Demolition Decapitation and the Hart Attack of all things, complete with signature Bret pose. They even hit a bad looking Doomsday Device but Shawn pops up at two and fires off right hands. Vince sneaks in with a shot to the back and down goes HBK again. Shawn scores with a double clothesline and everyone is down.

HHH is back up on the apron and actually takes the hot tag. Adrenaline kicks in and house is cleaned with a high knee and a neckbreaker to Shane. Clotheslines take both McMahons down and there's a spinebuster for the young one. Shawn drops the elbow on Vince and hits a Cactus Clothesline to take Shane out.

Here's Umaga to superkick Shawn and hit a quick Samoan Spike to HHH. This brings out Kane as the guy DX was talking to so he can fight Umaga to the back. Shane can only get two on the Game so Vince punches the referee. Shane loads up a Coast to Coast but Shawn superkicks him out of the air. A trashcan shot to Vince sets up Sweet Chin Music and the Pedigree for the pin.

Rating: B-. That's about as high as they can get and there's nothing wrong with that. The booking was as smart as you could get since there might not be two guys in the company that could be a legitimate threat to DX in a straight match so making it eleven on two to start was all they could do. The rest of the match is your usual tag team formula match and that's all they could do here. The fans popped for the ending too so I can't complain much.

Wrestlemania 23 is in Detroit.

We recap Edge vs. Cena. Edge won MITB last year at Wrestlemania and cashed in on Cena at New Year's Revolution nine months later. After some title trading with Van Dam and Cena, Edge wound up with the belt on Raw, setting up the one on one showdown here tonight.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Edge

Cena is the hometown boy tonight. If Edge gets disqualified he loses the title. Cena charges him into the corner and the booing begins. John pounds away and gets one off a back elbow and a belly to belly suplex. Edge avoids a charge to send Cena shoulder first into the post and out to the floor. It's kind of early for that spot. Back in and Edge beats on Cena with basic strikes before knocking him off the apron and into the barricade.

Cena makes it back in at nine but Edge immediately drops an elbow on his back for two more. John makes a comeback with right hands as the fans are booing even louder now. A quick fisherman's suplex gets two on Edge but he sends Cena over the top and out to the floor for the third time. Back in again and Cena misses a cross body to put him down again. Why it puts Edge down as well isn't clear.

We hit the chinlock for a good while until Cena breaks the hold with pure power. Cena hits a knee to the chest but walks into a big boot for two. Edge goes up top and fights off Cena so he can hit a top rope clothesline for two. Off to a camel clutch but Cena again powers out of it. Both guys are down so Lita sends in a chair. Edge picks it up before throwing it down out of fear in a cute bit. Cena initiates his finishing sequence but the FU is countered into the Impaler for two.

Edge goes up again but has to escape the FU off the ropes into an electric chair but Cena gets two off a victory roll. A middle rope cross body is rolled through into the FU but a Lita distraction makes Cena drop Edge. The champion is sent into his chick and Cena gets a close two off a rollup. A double clothesline puts both guys down until Edge rolls over for two.

The Canadian is up first but the spear is countered into the STFU. Lita tries to come in with the belt but Edge waves her off and gets the rope.

The referee has to drag Cena off, allowing Lita to load up brass knuckles on Edge's hand. Cena grabs the FU anyway but Lita comes in, only to be thrown on top of Edge in a double FU. How that isn't a DQ isn't clear but Cena flips her to the mat, allowing Edge to knock him out with the knuckles to retain the title.

Rating: B-. This took some time to get going but the ending was great. Edge winning is an interesting concept and they would go with the same idea next month when Cena beat Edge in Edge's signature match in his hometown. The match wasn't all that good though as it felt like they were just killing time until the end, which makes for a dull match.

Overall Rating: C. Right in the middle is about perfect here as there are almost equal amounts of good and bad. The interesting things about this show are the match lengths. Usually there are some very short matches and one or two longer ones. Here there's only one match under nine minutes and the longest is the main event which isn't even sixteen. That makes for a show where there's nothing huge to save the bad stuff and everything is almost equal in length, meaning you can weigh almost everything the same. The show is definitely watchable but skip Booker vs. Batista.

Ratings Comparison

Rey Mysterio vs. Chavo Guerrero

Original: C+

Redo: C+

Big Show vs. Sabu

Original: C

Redo: D

Hulk Hogan vs. Randy Orton

Original: B

Redo: D

Mick Foley vs. Ric Flair

Original: B-

Redo: B

Batista vs. King Booker

Original: D

Redo: D<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/wp-admin/post-new.php>

Vince McMahon/Shane McMahon vs. D-Generation X

Original: C-

Redo: B-

Edge vs. John Cena

Original: C+

Redo: B-

Overall Rating

Original: C+

Redo: C

Other than Hogan, not a lot changes here. This show pretty much is what it is.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/08/09/history-of-summerslam-count-up-2006-hogan-and-dx-are-in-charge-are-we-in-1998/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of NXT Reviews: The Full Sail Years Volume I at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B011T13PV4>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

New WWE DVD Survey

It's another of those surveys that WWE sends out to gauge interest in potential DVD projects. These can offer some compelling ideas so let's take a look at what might be on WWE's schedule.

ECW's Top 50 Craziest Moments

Yeah sure. As you probably know, ECW isn't my thing and they certainly had some insane moments, but I'm really over hearing about how great they were. There's definitely a market for it, but as a full on DVD? I'm not sure, but like I said, I'm not the target demographic.

Dudley Boyz Bio

I'd watch it. The Dudleys are one of the most successful tag teams of all time and giving them a full on three hour documentary and a quality match selection would definitely be worth the time. Just limit the Hardys/Edge and Christian matches to like two each. There are other teams out there.

The Best of 1996: 20 Years Later

This could be interesting as it's not quite the Attitude Era and there really is some great stuff in there. However, I'll turn it off (ok now I won't) if it turns into another "the NWO was awesome but we were going to have DX and we were never worried about it" show. Focus on something new instead.

Wrestlemania III

Sold. The behind the scenes stuff is always interesting and it's the biggest show of all time, meaning there have to be a ton of stories. Hearing WWE talking about the attendance question could be interesting. In case you're wondering, I say it's 93,173 for a few reasons.

1. The 80,000 limit or whatever you hear IS FOR FOOTBALL. A football field is 360 feet by about 160 feet. A WWF ring was at most 20ft by 20ft. Why this is never brought up isn't clear.

2. It's the official number. Just like the official line is that Undertaker and Kane are brothers, that Hulk Hogan is 6'8 and that Andre was 525lbs. Wrestling lies. Why this is supposed to be different isn't clear either.

3. What difference does it make? It's a lot of people.

Rivalries: Taz vs. Sabu

Again, this would be fine and hasn't been touched on enough, but it's not for me.

New Generation

Haven't there been enough Bret and Shawn DVDs already?

True Story of the Royal Rumble

Yep. I don't think this really needs any more explanation.

Rivalries: Eric Bischoff vs. Vince McMahon

We did a 20 part documentary on the Network about this already and I really, really do not need to hear about it ever again. The interviews could be entertaining but I'm totally over this entire subject. It was almost 20 years ago and it's over. Let it die already.

Hardcore

This would be a look back at the Hardcore Title years. This could be

incredibly entertaining if they kept it short and went completely over the top serious with it. Get Foley and Road Dogg to do commentary and break down the psychology behind hitting someone with a cookie sheet or just rip on Al Snow for a full match. That could be hysterical.

Countdown

As in a collection of the Network series. I think you can figure this one out for yourself. Bring this series back to as it's a very easy way to kill an hour.

Unreleased Match Compilation

The names listed are Michaels, Austin, Undertaker and Rock. I'd be all over those four as there are some really fun matches in there, as long as it's not just a bunch of PPV matches that I've seen a bunch of times before.

Rivalries

Again, it's a Network series.

Podcasts

On DVD? Why?

Wrestlemania Rewind

You might be noticing a pattern here. However, why haven't we gotten Summerslam/Royal Rumble/Survivor Series Rewind? There's a ton of stuff in there for different series.

Shane McMahon

This would be short and entertaining, but at the same time it would get repetitive since most of the matches are street fight style.

Best of NXT

Oh yeah. There's a ton of great stuff in the old days of NXT (the Full Sail years that is) that people have forgotten about. However, it might

be better to put that kind of thing in a different for. Like an e-book.
In July.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume III at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00X0UNBEA>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

New Column: Say Anything, As Long As It Makes Sense

This is basically the first half of this week's Reviewing the Review about why Raw SUCKED this week.

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-say-anything-long-makes-sense/35892/>

WWC Lucha Estrellas – March 9, 2015: Featuring Vince McMahon!

Lucha Estrellas

Date: March 9, 2015

Location: Puerto Rico

Commentator: Nelson Santano

This almost has to be better than the previous show I sat through, as I believe we're still coming up on the big show that they spent half the hour hyping up. Carlito is still feuding with Mighty Ursus but also has to deal with the young guy from last time...whoever that was. Let's get to it.

We open with a shortened version of the same opening from last time, with Carlito destroying the convenience store and flashbacks to the cage match.

Clips of the end of yesterday's main event with the young boy (wearing a mask) coming in and attacking Carlito until La Revolucion ran in to save Carlito. We also get the young guy talking to his brother.

The young guy was on the phone since yesterday.

Opening sequence.

Same Peter the Bad Romance promo from yesterday. Why don't I just watch that show again?

Clip of the ending of Peter vs. Angel Cotto with Peter winning with a fisherman's driver.

Same house show ad that I've seen like five times in an hour and a half.

And now, back to June 27, 1977 in Madison Square Garden for a WWF match announced by Vince McMahon! Why you ask? Well likely because this is on

the Network and more interesting than whatever nonsense I'll have to sit through otherwise.

Chad Nelson vs. Jose Gonzalez

Joined in progress with Chad cranking on the arm. Jose fights up and sends him into the buckle with one of those firey Latin comebacks. This time it's Jose starting in on the arm before four straight dropkicks put Nelson away.

Rating: F. Four dropkicks? Seriously, four straight versions of the same move? This went on nearly ten minutes in full and I can't imagine wanting to ever see either of these guys again. Luckily neither guy ever did anything that I know of and it's fairly easy to see why after a performance like this.

Same promos for the Tag Team Title match from yesterday.

Carlito and the guy on the phone, just like yesterday. They really don't change these things do they?

Puerto Rican Title: Chicano vs. Ricardo Rodriguez

Yes that Rodriguez, who is challenging here. Chicano is very tattooed but has a good look for the most part. As you might expect, Ricardo is quickly knocked to the floor to start and Chicano sends him into the post. Back in and Rodriguez gets in a shot to take over and heads back outside to choke from the floor. We hit a reverse chinlock but Ricardo lets it go to yell at the fans as we go to a break for more promos and house show ads.

Back with Chicano kicking out at two and backdropping Ricardo to get a breather. A huge clothesline gets two for Chicano as the announcers are now doing house show ads. Ricardo hits a jumping knee to the face but misses a moonsault. He's up fast enough to go up top, only to get shoved back down, setting up a Swanton to give Chicano the pin.

Rating: D+. Chicano looked good and thankfully Ricardo had a shirt on here. This wasn't much of a match but at least Chicano got to show off and hit a good looking Swanton to end it. He would win the Universal

Title less than a month after this show, so there was clearly something to him.

La Revolucion runs in to beat Chicano down post match. Apparently Chicano is challenging for the Puerto Rico Title, held by one of the nameless members of La Revolucion.

La Revolucion rants about Chicano.

Chicano rants about La Revolucion.

The young guy gets out of his car and goes to the house of some old guy, presumably for training.

Hey look: ads for a show.

William de la Vega and another guy yell about Superstar Ash.

The old guy talks to the young guy to end the show.

Overall Rating: F+. This show comes off like the old Memphis TV show: a glorified commercial for the upcoming arena shows, minus the interesting promos and the cool angles. Maybe the language barrier is messing things up for me, but this really isn't a fun show to watch, even if you can cut out about forty percent of it with the ads and replays from last week.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume III at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00X0UNBEA>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Thought of the Day: It's Been A While

You know what we haven't had in a long time in WWE? A good mystery. Like a masked man, someone attacking others in the back but not getting caught, a mystery opponent (that was properly built up), finding out who was behind something, figuring out what something meant (like a logo/symbol being left backstage) etc. Everything is revealed in like a week at most and there's no waiting on anything. Remember the search for Vince's child, or who ran over Austin, or finding out what the Taz logo was? Mix it up a little and let us wait every now and then.

WWE Survey On New DVDs

WWE does this from time to time. They've sent out a survey asking about potential DVD topics. Here they are with my thoughts on each.

* **20 Years Later: Best of 1996** – Matches and discussion from the best WWE and WCW PPVs as well as historic Nitro, Raw and ECW matches and moments.

Eh I could go for that, as at least it's not yet another rehash of the Monday Night Wars period.

* **Booker T** – Extended WWE Network documentary plus matches, interviews

and memories.

The documentary was good so sure why not. Booker deserves a 6 hour set or so.

* **Bruno Sammartino** – Bruno documentary with exclusive material filmed at his home as well as Bruno backstage at Wrestlemanias, plus archival footage and matches.

Take my money now. If they're going to do this they need to do it soon as Bruno is going to be 80 this year. Get this while you still can.

* **Dudley Boyz** – Documentary and match collection.

Fine, though it could easily be expanded to include Edge and Christian and the Hardys.

* **Eric Bischoff** – Similar in vein to the Paul Heyman release, a documentary on the only man who came close to taking WWE down with matches and interviews as well as a documentary on his time in pro wrestling.

I've had my fill of Eric Bischoff in my life and his story is really well documented already.

* **Greatest Rivalries: Eric Bischoff vs. Vince McMahon** – Sitdown interview discussing the Monday Night War interspersed with footage from that era.

LET

IT

DIE!

* **Greatest Rivalries: Tommy Dreamer vs. Raven** – Dreamer and Raven discuss their feud with Joey Styles, interspersed with complete matches, clips and interviews.

I could see this one but it's not my cup of hot chocolate.

* **How to Become a Self-Made Millionaire with JBL** – Following a day in the life of JBL, focusing on his life and how he made his fortune, including personal wealth tips.

That's a bit outlier and I'm not sure how big the audience would be, especially given how big a market there are of these things already. This sounds more like a book.

* **Hulk Hogan: Immortal** – Hulk Hogan documentary and matches presented, built around the story of a Hogan bronze statue being created and released.

How many Hogan documentaries do we need? That statue thing sounds like a 20 minute special, not a feature attraction.

* **Lex Luger** – documentary on life and career of former WCW World champion.

Zero issue here as Luger actually has some good stuff and doesn't get a lot of attention.

* **OMG! ECW's Top 50 Craziest Moments** – A countdown of the craziest moments in Extreme Championship Wrestling and WWE ECW's collective history.

Again, not my thing but there's certainly a market for it.

* **Roman Reigns** – Documentary and match collection, built around Reigns heading into his first Wrestlemania.

Are you kidding? Win a title first.

* **The Sheamus Experience** – Sheamus interview as he tours Ireland plus matches, interviews and memories.

I could go for this but it wouldn't be on the top of my pile.

* **Stone Cold** – One Man Show with Steve Austin.

This exists?

* **True Story of Tribute to the Troops** – Documentary on creation and execution of the annual WWE event for the United States military plus matches and memories from different events.

If it's the original stuff the fine but the new glorified house shows need to just end already.

* **WWE Divas** – documentary looking at the past, present and future of women's wrestling in WWE.

There's some good stuff in there, but I don't need to hear about Sunny, Sable, Trish and Lita again.